

Message Text

SECRET

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EXDIS

CAIRO FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EAID, JO, US
SUBJECT: ATHERTON'S TALK WITH PRIME MINISTER RIFAI -- ASSISTANCE
QUESTIONS

1. AT THE END OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON'S POST
DINNER DISCUSSION WITH PRIME MINISTER RIFAI DECEMBER 18,
LATTER RAISED ASSISTANCE QUESTIONS.
2. RIFAI INDICATED THAT MILITARY ASSISTANCE QUESTIONS HAD
BEEN COVERED AT DINNER WHERE AN UNDIRECTED DISCUSSION OF
ISRAELI FIGURES IN COMPARISON WITH THOSE BEING GIVEN TO
JORDAN TOOK PLACE WITH NO REAL RESULT. RIFAI SAID THERE
WAS SOME QUESTION RELATED TO ECONOMIC AID.
3. HE EXPLAINED THAT IN THE JORDANIAN BUDGET FOR THEIR
CURRENT FISCAL YEAR (CY 75) THEY HAD BUDGETED \$75 MILLION
IN US SUPPORT. WHAT THEY ACTUALLY WERE RECEIVING WAS
\$55 MILLION IN BUDGET SUPPORT AND \$20 MILLION IN PROJECT
AID AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE. AS A RESULT HE FACED A CASH
FLOW DEFICIT OF \$20 MILLION IN HIS BUDGET. HE COULD NOT
CORRECT IT THIS YEAR BUT WANTED TO CORRECT IT IN HIS
ENSUING FISCAL YEAR (CY 76).

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RM HE HAD TWO POINTS TO MAKE. HE SAID THAT HE HOPED NEXT YEAR WE COULD IN OUR CONSIDERATION OF PROJECTS FOR DEVELOPMENT AID, CONSIDER FAVORABLY THOSE WHICH WOULD ALSO PROVIDE A MEASURE OF BUDGETARY OR CASH FLOW RELIEF. JORDAN WOULD SHORTLY BE PROPOSING TO US SUCH PROJECTS. PRIMARILY THEY HAD IN MIND THE FUNDING OF SOME ADDITIONAL COSTS FOR CURRENT PROJECTS IN THE JORDAN VALLEY INCURRED BY INFLATIONARY PRICE INCREASES. THEY IN FACT HAD IDENTIFIED SOMETHING LIKE \$15 MILLION IN THIS CATEGORY. IN ANY EVENT, HE HOPED THERE WOULD BE A CHOICE OF PROJECTS AND THAT WE WOULD NOT BE CLOSED MINDED IN PROVIDING THEM WITH ADDITIONAL HELP OF THAT CATEGORY.

5. THE SECOND POINT HE MADE WAS THAT IN THE FUTURE THEY WOULD LIKE TO KNOW FOR PLANNING PURPOSES IN WORKING OUT THEIR BUDGET SOMETHING ABOUT OUR INTENTIONS FOR THE DIVISION OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE BETWEEN BUDGET SUPPORT ON THE ONE HAND AND PROJECT AID AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ON THE OTHER. IN PASSING RIFAI MENTIONED THAT JORDAN DESIRED A HIGHER LEVEL OF AID ON AN ANNUAL BASIS THAN THE PRESENT \$75-77 MILLION TOTAL.

YM IN REPLY, ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON NOTED THAT THESE WERE TECHNICAL QUESTIONS REGARDING ASSISTANCE AND THAT WE WOULD BE GLAD TO LOOK INTO FOR RIFAI. HE WAS NOT AWARE OF ALL OF THE DETAILS, BUT RIFAI'S PROPOSAL ON TRYING TO PROVIDE THE JORDANIANS IN ADVANCE WITH SOME INDICATION OF WHAT THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH WAS PLANNING SEEMED T MAKE SENSE. RIFAI SHOULD KNOW, HOWEVER, THAT THERE COULD BE NO COMMITMENT WITHOUT CONGRESS. RIFAI SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THIS COMPLETELY. HE WAS NOT SEEKING A COMMITMENT BUT MERELY AN IDEA FOR PLANNING PURPOSES AS TO WHAT THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH WAS PLANNING TO DO WITH REGARD TO THE BREAKDOWN BETWEEN BUDGET SUPPORT AND OTHER TYPES OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE SO THAT THEIR OWN BUDGET PLANNING PROCESS COULD BECOME MORE REALISTIC.

7. ABOVE PREPARED FOLLOWING DEPARTURE OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON AND IS OBVIOUSLY SUBJECT TO HIS CLEARANCE AND COMMENT.

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PICKERING

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